

THE DEVNAGRI SCRIPT

Devnagri is the script of the Rigveda in Sanskrit, the oldest book in the world. Later on, the other three Vedas were also written in Devnagri. All the Sanskrit classics have also been written in Devnagri. Grammar is an integral part of learning any language. A systematic way of teaching grammar in Sanskrit was introduced before the 12th century B.C. Panini, the greatest teacher of Sanskrit grammar wrote Ashtadyayi and arranged Devnagri alphabets in such a way that the learning of Sanskrit grammar became easy. His arrangement of alphabets - Sutra (formula) was scientific and could be learnt by heart. His very first Sutra contains all alphabets according to phonetic sounds. It reads :

अ इ उ ण्। ऋ लृ क्। ए ओ ङ्। ऐ औ च्। ह य व र ढ्। लण्।

झ ब ज्ञ्। घ ढ ध ष्। ज ब ग ङ द श्। ख फ छ ज्ञ्। ठ थ च ट त व्। क प य्। श ष स र्। ह ल्।

Later, Varadraj Pandit wrote Laghu Kaumudi and Madhya Kaumudi and Bhattoji wrote Sidhanta Kaumudi in 1512 AD to teach Sanskrit grammar in a different way. To make the grammar an interesting learning experience Varadraj Pandit added a story which has become a legend. The story goes that when Lord Shiva played his Damru (Tabor), different sounds of swar (vowels) and vyanjana (Consonants) came out in an arrangement which became the first Panini Sutra. The alphabets of Devnagri script carry all these sounds even today. The Hindi language has adopted this Devnagri script.

- Manorama Jafa

अ आ इ ई
उ ऊ ऋ ए ऐ
ओ औ अं अः